the Central Government to reconsider the decision of imposing ban on hunting of all species of sharks & rays as well as 52 species of molluscs.

(d) and (c) Keeping in view the genuine problems of the poorer section of the fishermen community and after consulting the scientists and marine biology experts, the Government has decided to restrict the ban for the present to 10 shark species and 24 molluscs only.

Threat to Tadoba Tiger Reserve

2793. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the deforestation process has created a major threat to Tadoba Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra;

(b) whether it is a fact that Tadoba is the second biggest wild life reserve in Maharashtra;

(c) whether the Wild Life Conservation Department has expressed grave apprehension that if timely action is not taken to preserve the forest, it may cause huge damage to the Tadoba Tiger Reserve; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken, to stop deforestation in the area?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) No deforestation in Tadoba Tiger Reserve has been reported, and it is also not the second largest Wildlife Reserve in the State of Maharashtra. Some apprehensions have been expressed regarding the likely advers impact of a proposed River Valley Project in Chandrapur District of Maharashtra on the migratory route of wild animals of Tadoba Tiger Reserve. The safeguards taken by the Government to conserve the wildlife and its habitats in Tiger reserves include:—

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals including tigers against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) act, 1972.

(ii) Financial and technical help is being extended to States under Centrally Sponsored Schemes for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure to provide effective protection and improvement of habitat for wild animals, apart from Eco-development. During the current financial year, the amounts allotted to Tadoba Tiger Reseve under Project Tiger and Eco-development Schemes are Rs. 66.11 lakhs and Rs. 13.00 lakhs respectively.

(iii) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(iv) Ministry of Home Affairs - has written to all State Governments to lend a helping hand to field formations for curbing poaching and illegal trade in wildlife.

(v) A Special Coordination and Enforcement Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Secretary (Environment and Forests) Government of India for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife.

(vi) A National Conference of Forests and Environment Ministers of Stated Government was held on 29th and 30th January, 2001. It was resolved to organise existing protection staff into viable formations for effective control within and outside protected areas.

(vii) During IX Plan period, the area of Tiger Reserves has increased from 33,167 sq. km. to 37,761 sq. km.

(viii) Assessing the impact of any developmental project on wildlife and its habitat.

Use of Genetically Modified Seeds

†2794. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that commercial production of crops is

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.